

17. (Amended) An oligonucleotide [consisting essentially of] consisting of a nucleotide sequence of 14 to 50 nucleotides complementary to a region of RNA or DNA of HTLV-III, wherein the region of RNA or DNA is selected from the group consisting of regions necessary for replication of HTLV-III, regions necessary for gene expression of HTLV-III, and regions necessary for both replication of HTLV-III and gene expression of HTLV-III, wherein [anywhere from] one to all internal phosphate groups of said oligonucleotide are modified such that the modified phosphate groups do not prevent (a) inhibition of HTLV-III replication, gene expression, or both, (b) uptake into infected cells, (c) inhibition of degradation of the oligonucleotide, (d) prevention of the use of the oligonucleotide as a primer by reverse transcriptase, or (e) any combination thereof.

25. (Amended) An oligonucleotide of Claim 17, wherein the nucleotide sequence is complementary to a region of the HTLV-III genome selected from the group consisting of:

- a) the tRNA<sup>lys</sup> primer binding site;
- b) regions of the HTLV-III genome vicinal in the 5' direction to the tRNA<sup>lys</sup> primer binding site;
- c) the mRNA donor splice sites;
- d) the mRNA acceptor splice sites;
- e) the initiator codon for the *gag* gene;
- f) the initiator codon for the *env* gene;
- g) the initiator codon for the *tat* gene;
- h) the initiator codon for the *sor* gene;

- A<sup>2</sup>  
concluded
- i) the initiator codon for the 3' *orf* gene;
  - j) the cap nucleotide of the HTLV-III genome; and
  - k) the *art* gene or portions thereof[; and]
  - [l) the region of the HTLV-III genome encoding a frameshift].
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A<sup>3</sup>

44. (Amended) An oligonucleotide according to claim 17, wherein the modified internal phosphate group or groups is a phosphorothioate.

45. (Amended) An oligonucleotide according to claim 18, wherein the modified internal phosphate group or groups is a phosphorothioate.

46. (Amended) An oligonucleotide according to claim 19, wherein the modified internal phosphate group or groups is a phosphorothioate.

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48. (Amended) An oligonucleotide according to claim 21, wherein the modified internal phosphate group or groups is a phosphorothioate.

A<sup>4</sup>

49. (Amended) An oligonucleotide according to claim 22, wherein the modified internal phosphate group or groups is a phosphorothioate.

50. (Amended) An oligonucleotide according to claim 23, wherein the modified internal phosphate group or groups is a phosphorothioate.

51. (Amended) An oligonucleotide according to claim 24, wherein the modified internal phosphate group or groups is a phosphorothioate.